

EarthFirst!

No. 47 March 1998

Now is the time to get serious and have silly fun with the family and to just reward your hard work.



HOUSEBUILDERS' HQ FIELD DAY

On 2nd February a group of EFTers and friends occupied the offices of the House Builders Federation(HBF), which lobbies for building commuter houses on greenbelt land rather than the provision of social housing.

Armed only with their wits and sets of Oligopoly (a Monopoly type board game based on the exploits of the HBF) the group attempted to obtain previously undisclosed info such as a list of HBF members, an explanation for why 3 of the directors have given the HBF office address as their home address (in breach of the Companies Act 1985), and details of the amount of acreage of government land banks held by HBF members.

Various filing cabinets were investigated and a meeting in the company's board room was interrupted - a rather keen security tried to keep protesters out but succeeded in locking three of them in the room with the Chief Executive. While this was going on inside, musicians outside performed alternative versions of their favourite chart-topping tunes, including the Verve's 'The Plan Won't Work' / 'All this talk of building homes / It's bringing me down my love / Like a flat for a pic, in a new town, upon

BREWERY FIELDS ARRUGA

URGENT... strap on your harness, rub your face in the mud and head for North Wales... you'll never need a lift again.

an English down

Although no arrests were made everyone was searched on their way out of the building. The action got significant media coverage, especially in the construction trade press.

Other excursions by this happy band of appalling lyncists are planned. Contact 01865 721366

Meanwhile, in a field near Bradford, activists from Leeds EEP brought work on the greenfield housing development at Sandy Lane in Bradford to a six hour halt by climbing onto the only working digger. Security guards were notable by their absence.

relations with workers were good and there were no arrests. One resident commented "Most people round here are in total support of this kind of action, it's our only option left."

Residents have been taking direct action against the construction of the 92 Bryant Homes since work started including squatting the access to the site, locking the access gates and diverting a stream back across the worksite. Those involved are hoping to broaden their campaign to take in other greenbelt housing developments. Contact the Sandy Lane housing campaign on 01274 495264



and control the means of production of food simply in the interests of profit."

typed in Nowitz's grain sizes in *Norse*. (And the only regret I have now is that I wasn't able to destroy more of it.) I knew that

BREWERY FIELDS ARRUGA!

URGENT - strap on your harness, rub your face in the mud and head for North Wales - people are needed at Brewery Fields, near Bangor. Contractors have moved in to build a road and 300 houses and police are imposing 1/2 mile bail conditions.

Brewery Fields is a 30 acre greenfield site, containing woodland, meadow, marsh and heathland and has not been ploughed for over 40 years. The site is owned by Gwyndd Council but has been used as recreation space by locals for decades. They have been campaigning against the development for six years, the only reason that the Council is proceeding is that the land was designated for development in the 1950s.

Last year an application to turn the land into a Town Green was rejected, despite the fact that it was shown to have been used daily by residents as a green for over thirty years. For directions or information contact the site mobile on 0836 563980 or office on 01248 388011 7/8 or fax the camp on 01248 871874.

X MARKS THE SPOT

To highlight the risk of genetic pollution protesters visited an AgriEvo oilseed rape test site in Scotland this month. The group, a bunch of gnomes called The Human Genome Project, painted a large red X across the field before signing the nearby road with placards declaring the area a "biohazard".

"It's time you humans woke up to the dangers of this technology," said a spokesperson. "AgriEvo have been reluctant to divulge the location of this dangerous experiment. If they won't let the human people know, then we will do it for them. The inhabitants of Elfe, human and gnome alike, have a right to know that this crop will pollute the environment while the long-term results are unknown."

Gnome Chomsky added, "The only people who can possibly benefit from GM crops are the multinationals biotech companies like AgriEvo and Monsanto - they wish to commodify

and control the means of production of food - simply in the interests of profit."

The Human Genome Project is hoping that while letters to MPs and polite phone calls don't work, a bunch of gnomes may be taken seriously. Contact the gnomes c/o Fife EF! (see contacts list) or direct through any fairy ring.

IT'S MAIZE JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT!

The three French farmers who destroyed 5 tons of Novartis genetically engineered Bt maize seed (see French Farmers Destroy GE Maize in Jan AU) have been sentenced: two of them to eight months suspended imprisonment, one to five months, and all to pay Novartis FFr 500 000 damages. It is not yet clear whether they will appeal the decision or agree to pay Novartis.

One of the 3 included this in his account to the court: "Today, I am accused of committing a serious crime according to the law. The alleged crime is the destruction of stocks of genetically modified maize. Yes, this is serious and that's why I assume full responsibility for it. I believe in the ability of everyone to act as an individual. There is no place in our trade union for a hierarchy of responsibility... The strength of our union movement rests on this determination to mobilise free individuals who accept all the consequences of their acts knowing fully the meaning for them. Yes, on the 8th of January I participated in the destruction of genetically modified maize, which was

offered to Novartis's grain silos in Nantes. (And the only regret I have now, is that I wasn't able to destroy more of it.) I know that by doing in this way I was doing something illegal. But it was necessary, and we had no other choice. The way in which genetically modified agricultural products have been imposed on European countries didn't leave us with any alternative. When was there a public debate on genetically modified organisms? When were farmers and consumers asked what they think about this? Never. The decisions have been taken at the level of the World Trade Organisation, and state machinery complies with the law of market forces. A democratic debate simply doesn't exist... Everything has to be allowed to continue in silence. So appearing before you today, I'm aware of being in breach of the law which wants every citizen to be content with expressing her or his views by simply putting their vote in the urn every six years... Yes, this action was illegal, but I lay claim to it because it was legitimate. I don't demand clemency, but justice. Either we have acted in everyone's interest and you will acquit us, or we have shaken the establishment and in this case you will punish us. There is no other issue."

Contact <confpays@clubserveur.org>, fax. + 33 1 436 8003

GERROFF MY STREET

The recent pro-hunting Countryside March did not go off entirely as planned - the frequency on which it's 'March FM' was broadcasting for the day was hijacked by a group called the Hunt Sabot Broadcast Corporation. These drowned out the Countryside Alliance's signal with their own and replaced the pro-hunting station with a DJ shouting 'Fuck off our land! Now!'

An undisclosed 4-figure sum was paid for the day's radio licence as it was intended to broadcast speeches by various pro-hunt landowners. All attending were encouraged to tune in - those that did were treated to London's finest acid-house together with some words from our sponsor.

THE RIGHT TO ROAM 28 / 29 March & DIGGERS' DAY 1st April

Mass Trespass in commemoration of the Diggers movement. Meet 1pm Luton Station. At 1.30 coaches will take people to a mystery destination to trespass and make camp for the evening. The weekend will include speakers, music, special guests, festivities and feasting. Bring tents, musical instruments, banners and food to share. Site details will be available on 01865 722016 or 0403 176410 from the Saturday so that anyone can join in over the weekend. Contact TLA on 01865 722016 or email office@the_diggers.org.uk, so that they can get the coaches to fit the numbers. Diggers Day will be a joint The Land is Ours and Advisory Service for Squatters day of respect for Winstanley and those nonviolent direct action pioneers of 1649. There will be a reflective chat and ramble at Weybridge, Surrey. Contact 0171 359 5185 or 0117 8224391.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Do or Die has the streets that March - 164 pages, £7.50 inc p&p, £6 overseas. This compilation of voices from activists within EPP comes highly recommended. 'We almost killed ourselves and each other doing it, so we think it's quite good.' Contact South Down EPP (fax contact list) Earth EPP and 'Spirit of Freddie' (Earth Liberation Front) share a web site http://www.earthliberation.org.uk/Earth_2002/08/15.html

Holland EPP has new contact details (see list). They are pressuring an campaign against the A350 and for Section 1 measures in Bristol

Yester Tat Nagasaki has produced a catalogue of its wars, featuring cut price skinning gear alongside items of publications. Yester Tat was set up by activists in response to their need in campaigns such as the Third Battle of Newbury. Contact 0113 2629385 or e-mail contact@yester-tat.org.uk

Two Guelph EPP defendants are due in court from the 27th April on charges of "conspiracy to injure persons unknown". To publicise the plight of the three journalists already in prison and to draw attention to that that the two are doing a National tour. See Events for locations

Apologies for a mistake in a web address in the January issue - [www.cafodfreeschool.org.uk](http://www.cafodfreeschool.org.uk/cafodfreeschool.html) is what it is. The correct address is www.cafodfreeschool.com/cafodfreeschool.html

Dear Wayne's Warhol last! all charges from the invasion have been dropped. It was found to be a breach of Article 6 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Protesters are now gathering before a 100 mile walk to the Home Office. Spontaneous digger diving and ribbon dressing will be happening at the building of the road cameras. If contact 0161 888 8814

Undercurrents, the video network outlet is back on the contact list following talk about the relationship between them and activists. These talks take time to resolve and though our discussions were positive there is still a range of views on the matter

Positive Peace Camp is in session on 1st April for an induction training. 80% of Scots are opposed to Trident. People are needed on site and on the phone line. Contact 01436 720984

A network is taking shape to stop CASTROL working at Salfordfield for re-processing, in solidarity with protests in Germany. It arrives on average 4 vehicles, for more info call 0161 813 8663, or e-mail peace@sfu.org.uk

DERBY DEFIANCE

Derby students set up a city centre camp in February after plans to develop one of their few green spaces was revealed. The area, Bass Recreation Park and Mill Flatts, was donated to the people of Derby in 1876 with most land being given by the Bass brewery in the 70s. It is now used as a public open space and a grade 1 wildlife site. Despite this, the City Council and developers Newrest Parks intend to bulldoze through the area. For a Met road and roundabout. Plans extend to demolishing the existing bus station to build a shopping centre in its place. A new bus station with space for half as many buses is to be built on site, currently used as a small ornamental water garden.

There are already 20 people on site with free houses being put up and donations made from day one. A local TV company ran a vox pop which concluded that for every 2 residents in support of the road there were 80 against. Apparently the Bass brewery are also not particularly happy about the proposed development, whilst they are trying to create more public parks for the residents they don't want the ones they've already given them. Chambers and support needed - contact Derby Friends of the Earth on 01332 727337 or Nottingham EPP (see contacts list)

THE ACTION UPDATE NEEDS YOU -

MANCHESTER EPP HAS PRODUCED THE AU FOR OVER A YEAR NOW AND, DUE TO LOTTIER COMMITMENTS, ARE MAKING THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE AU THEIR FINAL ONE. THIS MEANS THAT UNLESS ANOTHER GROUP TAKES ON THE AU, IT GOES DORMANT. CAN YOU HELP? HANOVER AND TRAINING PROVIDED.

CONTACT EPP AU 0161 224 4346

CHAIN GANG IN OIL PLANT DEMO

Travelling along the approach road to the Coryton oil refinery in Essex, a group of protesters were as arrested in the night that they blocked the road.

Protesters. The bailiffs were invited but have recently occupied their site and need some support to keep pressure on

Detailed directions to the camp are available contact 01621 482111 or 0161 7389920 or look it up on the campaign website <http://www.gap-uk.org/gapping/>

OXFORD RECLAIMED

Around 100 cyclists reclaimed Oxford's names recently to draw attention to the city's pollution and accident rate. They cycled around the historic streets accompanied by a racy indecent playing dance music, and the local contabulatory themelies on bicycles and motorbikes!

One arrow was made for bananach on the High Street, held to be an obstruction of the highway

KINGSTON EVICTION

The application for felling trees at Canterbury Gardens, Kingston was signed on 17th March. Protesters are now waiting for the dates of demolition to evict them

The trees on both sides of the narrow park have rope walkways connecting them plus single noosebans, banners and so on. According to one visitor the most impressive structure is a rickety tower, designed in tangle of any of the trees that is connected by its ropes and walkways is cut down. It's constructed completely of nailed together bits of wood, is about forty feet high and perched on a smaller tower. Attached to it on one side are letters from children who have visited the camp

Protesters from Canterbury northern stations, turn right out of the station, walk along the footpath, over a bridge, turn right into an underpass under the railway. Turn left immediately after to head straight for the river. Canterbury Gardens is on the right as you reach the Thame

G8 ACTIONS COMING UP

This May (15th - 17th) heads of state of the eight most industrialised countries will converge on Birmingham to discuss globalisation. They will be joined by the leaders of the World Bank, the IMF and World Trade Organisation (WTO). Although the meeting has no policy making structure it defines issues that will set global agendas and dominate economic thinking for the coming year. After Birmingham the G8 will fly to Geneva to sign the final offering of neo-liberal free trade from the WTO.

Global Days of Action are planned during the G8 summit, raising key social and ecological issues and challenging the right of the G8/policy decisions that affect the world. To the activists descending upon Birmingham watch this space.

WEST COUNTRY GETS

EVENTS

MARCH

18-27 Festival Peace Camp's Young Ganging Festival Contact 01452 299911 61452429991
23-27 Put Blood Atrocity module training, organised by and Stop the Mass Death vigil whilst 6 East Timorese victims and 17 peace activists are buried. Message to Cllr. Lyndon, Contact 0161 7364741
24 Stop logging on the Great Bear Rainforest, British Columbia. Action from London, Contact Peace Action Network 0118 7020016 or 0142 1764118
26 Anniversary Day of Action on Huntington Life Science Laboratories. Contact 0161 6246451
28-29 Mass Disposal demonstration of the Digger investment. Contact 0161 7202016 or 0142 1764118

APRIL

1 The first ever Digger Day demonstration. Contact 0116 2124191
1 Festival Peace Camp's last -乾祭 of the year. Bring flags. Contact 0145 2179961
3-8 Gathering Visions Gathering Strength II Manchester University. Contact 0161 294 5761
4-7 G-8NIR 4-7 118 BATHON TIGER writing Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham, Birmingham, Oxford, Guildford, Portsmouth, Brighton & Big London climate. Contact 0895 6194102
8-10 International Action Day. Rightly Gathering Netherlands. Contact UK 0120 4402005
10-11 Love and Rockets Action 12 weeks. British Det Stress Car Park. Workshops on the social reality and emotions aspect (not awareness). Contact British EPP 0117 9951909
11-12 A weekend of international resistance to British Aerospace sales of Hawk aircraft to Indonesia. Exeter Det and resistance gathering, all welcome. Contact 01392 264 8761
13-15 Massive反戰 and peace at 2nd Battle of Hastings anti-war-movie. Contact The 2nd Battle of Hastings Coalition 0161 7176611
16-18 Hammer & Spazzini exploring a ploughshare approach to environmental action. London. Contact 0161 214 2096
18 World Day for Earth Awareness. Wellington Park. Dry Lane, Wimpy. Meet 1pm, at the park
19 Save the Green Bell Rally 11am, Seaview. Contact 0171 566 1699
18 9/4 action, Gillian Gillian GM&B 0207 210 2100
19 Canterbury RTB, open railway station
20 MAY

20 May Day Gathering, breaking down barriers, spreading, degrowth and kickstarting the revolutionary movement. Contact 0161 807 9607, PO Box 9407, Leeds LS2 0LB
9 Wolverhampton RTB
15-17 Grimsby, Nottingham, Glasgow, Manchester EPP 0161 214 4846
16 Global Seven Party Contact KTS 0161 281 0021
20 No Open cast mining March in to Brierley. Contact 0161 761 5942 or 0161 872 9668

JUNE

4-16 Fair Trade in Conflict. Contact Rio Latin Europe 0170 272 8151 Glasgow/Edinburgh 0141 333 2000
13-20 Nottingham Green Transport Week. Contact Nottingham EPP 0115 9161000
15-16 Anti and Alternative Day of Action. Contact 0161 214 2096 or 0161 214 2098

Protests at the Birmingham Northern Relief Road early yesterday took a squat route. The official notice in print was served almost immediately and court proceedings were underway. Contact 01921 800 978.

THE PRELIMINARY ORGANISING MEETING FOR THE 1998 EF! SUMMER GATHERING WENT WELL WITH PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ATTENDING. INPUT FROM THOSE WHO DIDN'T MANAGE TO MAKE IT IS STILL WELCOMED - THE NEXT MEETING IS ON MONDAY APRIL 6TH. CONTACT LEEDS EF! 0113 2429365 IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.

CAMPS

Birmingham Northern Relief Road 01921 800 978. Derbyshire camp 01332 727337 (mail@birminghamcamp.org.uk). Ashton Court Quarry 0117 9399399. Bury St Edmunds camp scheme 01284 569436, Kestle Mill 0117 9399468, Fadlana 0116 239001, Brewery road in Bury St Edmunds 01284 569466. Tidley Barleypan 0848 221454, Radnorshire 01743 432211. Lynton Forest 01835 265151, Alvis Factory peace camp 01926 518805. Aldershot peace camp 0171 919746. Merton Hill women peace camp 01943 463591.

PRISONERS

9 prior prison sentences from Nov 91 bundled into the Gaandhi 3. For reporting on direct action "conspiracy to assist persons unknown to commit criminal damage". **Forest Barnehurst Wood CR4 122 (NB new address)** 11MP Send, Rayle Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 7LL. **Silver Roads CR4 3JA, HMP Lancaster, Lancaster Castle, Lancaster LA1 1YL**. **West Midland CR4 121 HMP Churnet Wood, Denbigh, Newmire Abbey, Devon TQ12 0DA**.

12 months for charges relating to the protest against the second runway at Manchester Airport. **John Davies (CH45) 17/04/98** (date of 17th April). **Barry Williamson (CH5067)**, HMP Aylesbury, Farnhamerley, Liverpool, L9 7LH.

EF! oil refinery in Essex, a group of demonstrators were so appalled at the sight that they blocked the road. Minutes later the car was straddling both lanes and 2 citizens were attached to the underside of the vehicle. Bassett reported reading *Oilring the World's Oil* and *Tax Oil* - a reference to the leases issued by the oil industry by government (the UK's tax regime for oil exploration is bizarrely only southern Ireland worldwide for its perks). The tax revenue was particularly apt as the following day Gordon Brown failed to crack down on that even subsidised energy source. "It's a clear case of corporate welfare before social aid", said a spokesman for the protesters. "In the budget we saw the Government pandering to a few oil-rich, oil-subsidised companies, whilst attacking us all others, disabled and unemployed."

With such an approach road was blocked up for at least four miles, with over 100 taxmen unable to enter the refinery. The drivers, calling themselves UKODA, or UK Oil Defenders Association (accordingly refusing the UK Offshore Operators Association's invitation to meet) with the refinery manager to discuss their demands - the shutting down of Cogen and a ban of organic chemicals.

With the manager arrived, there was a "fall and flush" exchange of verbal between her and the two sacked beneath the car, although he was not delighted to negotiate with the two pairs of shoes striking out. Eventually the police stepped in and arrested the five unarmed citizens for obstruction of the highway. Bassett then returned with the largest part of his belongings they could find, intending to liberate the remaining two. But the copper's coppers proved unequal to the task. At which point the fire brigade were called out.

Carryon's only approach road was inaccessible for over two hours, and EF! was in the dock on the fly to a small region but shareholders' doomsday.

ASHTON COURT

The camp at Ashton Court Quarry is moving into a new phase of activity as work on the site is likely to start any day.

The camp was set up at a focus for the protest against the expansion of Dartmoor Quarry into Ashton Court, a public park near Bristol. The park was bought by the city council in 1959, who have leased 20 acres at the top end of the estate to Pioneer Aggregates, an American multinational. Pioneer want to expand the Quarry, and have been given planning permission, against the wishes of local people.

This will destroy 20 acres which currently supports a diverse habitat.

Part of the land to be dug up includes a wildflower meadow that Pioneer is proposing replacing on another field, half a mile away, which is inhabited by

journalists and activists!

WEST COUNTRY GETS IT TOGETHER!!

On 21st February around 130 people attended the West Country Action Gathering. The day started with an introduction to campaigns going on in the south west, ranging from anti-querries to Zapatista support. Four sets of workshops in the afternoon covered Building the West Country Action Network, Environmental Ploughshares, The Land is Ours, and a workshop on general issues arising from local direct actions. The aim of the gathering was to bring together campaigners in the west to create a stronger support network.

There are vague plans for another event some time at the end of the summer. Contact the West Country Action Network, PO Box 436, RATHBURN 2220.

WOMEN TAKE POLICE BOAT

On 13th March four women walked undetected inside RNAS Culdrose, checking on the presence of nuclear materials, before finding an unauthorised police launch and requesting it for their lawful peace work. Driving past a security guard in the watchtower above the jetty where Trident boats have then warheads loaded, the women drive the inflatable right up to an open hatch. After 20 minutes inspection they decided to check on Trident submarine in Faslane. After pointing at least four other police inflatables and launches they reached Faslane and were spotted as they raced by the naval berths trying to find a way to the submarine.

Although the women were arrested no charges have been brought so far.

ZAPATISTA PICKET

The Mexican government was blamed for the massacre at Acteal in Chiapas, a recent picket outside its Embassy in London by Agora Mayan reading "Murderers" was stretched tightly clockwise. Naming the ruling party, the crowd chanted "PGR, PGR, subversives". They demanded "Pura tropa de Chiquito, jajabon de Chacal".

The Ambassador deflected the invitation to come outside, but an Embassy of Peru invited a small delegation to meet him inside. The delegations were fed in his office and made brief statements. He listened to convey their concerns to the Mexican government, but gave no clear answer to their questions. According to the Ambassador the government is searching for a peaceful solution, but he would not explain why they still insist on the San Andes Accords. Contact 0181 979 9930.

McLellan 0117 940 0000, e-mail united@united.org.uk, fax 0117 940 0001.

McLellan Anniversary Day of Action. Contact McLellan Support Campaign 0117 713 1269.

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If the envelope is folded, please make sure it has the rest - otherwise it will be returned.



DOING TIME

"Under a government which also imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison."

Henry David Thoreau

An increasing state reaction to nonviolent direct action is to attempt to control activists through physical imprisonment. Prison has the potential to be an effective deterrent but does not necessarily have to be so. Some activists see punishment as the most important part of civil disobedience, as it is the fear of personal consequences that often prevents us from stopping violence and creating a more just society. The function of punishment - to make citizens驯服 (submissive) so that they become their own jailers - can be made to lose its effect, according to Per Hennings. Whether or not this is the case, while prison is a possible consequence of our actions as Earth First!, through non-payment of fines or other activity, it is important to demystify the institution through information and preparation.

WHAT TO EXPECT

"Those arrested as a result of nonviolent direct action have the advantage over most prisoners of knowing that they are there having made a degree of conscious choice, this knowledge can provide a degree of strength

Being in prison can give a rounded view of the oppressive society against which we struggle in nonviolent resistance - this may be apparent not just in the organisational systems of prison but in the inmates themselves - a significant number of people are poor and/or in prison for poverty related crime

Prison is a lonely place - it aims to weaken solidarity, to try to isolate people from one another and reduce one's concentration in dealing with the demands of authority and of one's survival

Entering prison is like going into another culture - new behavioural norms, language, symbols, new reality. You can expect some overcrowding, frustrating and irritating levels of noise and distraction and little personal space or privacy. It may be difficult to sleep, there may be radios and TVs, slumbering bays and loud arguments. Time will be distorted - days will slip by but each hour may seem like an eternity. Food will be starchy and dull. You will learn to wait, to eat plain food, a shower, a meal, the answer to a question, the time of day.

The wardens in prison have a great deal of power and they are aware of this. Long exposure to prison, whether as a prisoner or a guard, tends to have a corrosive effect on one's confidence in humanity, and the wardens are victims of that as well. They expect the worst out of people and are not often disappointed. Their principal concern is to preserve order, which demands an atmosphere of unquestioning respect (fear) for authority. This is their contribution to the process of "rehabilitation", supplanting personal responsibility with thoughtless obedience and submission. Try not to indulge them in their exalted self image - expect that they should act with respect and compassion whilst remembering that you and they have different jobs to perform. Let them be responsible for keeping order while you are responsible for keeping your conscience.

Just because your body is detained doesn't mean you've got to turn in your conscience and convictions along with your other belongings. Whether in prison or not, the freedom we enjoy is always the freedom we claim for ourselves. Being under lock and key does not deprive you of your essential freedom as long as you continue to insist on your power to say "yes" or "no" within the limits of whatever situation you find yourself. It was your commitment to make decisions for yourself about what you should and shouldn't do that landed you in prison in the first place and it reminds a good principle to live by."

(Based on "Surviving This Is Life", the War Resisters League Handbook)

FOOD

Different diets can be catered for upon request - a vegan diet is guaranteed for members of the Vegan Society (01424 427193) and may be available for others. In recent times some prisoners have gone on hunger strike to demand a diet free of genetically manipulated products. For more on this contact GM-Free Prisoner Support, Dept 29, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1

LETTERS

"While alone in a soul in prison, I am not free" - Eugene Debs

Writing letters is probably the most important thing that you can do from the outside. Prison distances you from the "real" world and a friendly letter breaks down that feeling. Remember that all letters are censored, so do not write anything that may jeopardise other actions or anyone else's freedom. Try and find other things to write about than just how great you think the person is and how you feel that you can't do as much. In the words of a prisoner, "Don't send me seeds or sympathy. Send me a picture of yourself in the fence of a missile site." If you cannot think of what to write, send a card, postcard, picture or poem. Don't necessarily expect a reply as some prisons limit the amount of letters which can be sent out and in those which don't, the prisoner still has to buy stamps and envelopes.

VISITS

Remind prisoners are normally allowed regular visits of one to three people (they all have to visit at the same time). Check in advance with the prisoner or their support rather than just turning up - not only will it be disappointing for the person expecting to visit, but as prison is a draconian experience it can be distressing to expect one person only to see another. Convicted prisoners are entitled to less regular visits.

BOOKS, MONEY, FOOD, CASSETTES, OTHER CONSUMER GOODS

Regulations on these will vary - contact the Visitor's Centre at the particular prison for info

GENERAL SUPPORT

Action on the above and other aspects of prison can be arranged by supporters on the outside, often via the prisoner's solicitor. Support after prison is also essential.

FURTHER INFO:

Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group (ALF 80), BCM 1160, London WC1N 3DX

Spirit of Freedom (Earth Liberation Prisoners), 60 BM HEAL, London WC1N 3DX

National Prisoner's Movement, BM-PROP, London WC1N 3DX, 0181 542 3744

Women in Prison, via Women's Environmental Network 0171 247 3327

The Daily Hammer (newsletter of the Ploughshares Support Network), no.8 'special issue on prison', PSN, Box X, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford

Tudor Ploughshares 2000 Handbook 01603 611953

Civil Disobedience, Henry David Thoreau, 1849

Any prisoner's diaries that you can get your hands on

